

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. – 35. (Canceled)

36. (Currently Amended) A method of increasing the salt tolerance of a plant in need thereof, comprising ~~enhancing~~ increasing the expression of a polynucleotide encoding a SOS1 protein, wherein said SOS1 protein has Na⁺/H⁺ transporter activity, ~~the SOS1 gene~~ in said plant as compared to the expression of said polynucleotide in the wild-type of said plant.

37. – 42 (Canceled)

43. (New) The method of claim 36, wherein said polynucleotide comprises a sequence that is at least 70% identical to the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1.

44. (New) The method of claim 36, wherein said polynucleotide comprises a sequence that is at least 80% identical to the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1.

45. (New) The method of claim 36, wherein said polynucleotide comprises a sequence that is at least 90% identical to the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1.

46. (New) The method of claim 36, wherein said polynucleotide comprises the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1.

47. (New) The method of claim 36, wherein said polynucleotide encodes a polypeptide that is at least 70% identical to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2.

48. (New) The method of claim 36, wherein said polynucleotide encodes a polypeptide that is at least 80% identical to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2.

49. (New) The method of claim 36, wherein said polynucleotide encodes a polypeptide that is at least 90% identical to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2.

50. (New) The method of claim 36, wherein said polynucleotide encodes a polypeptide that is at least 95% identical to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2.

51. (New) The method of claim 36, wherein said polynucleotide encodes the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 2.

52. (New) The method of claim 36, wherein said plant is *Arabidopsis thaliana*.

53. (New) The method of claim 36, wherein said plant is selected from the group consisting of wheat, corn, peanut cotton, oat, and soybean plant.

54. (New) The method of claim 36, wherein said increasing the expression comprises increasing the copy number of said polynucleotide as compared to the wild-type plant.

55. (New) The method of claim 36, wherein said increasing the expression comprises replacing the native promoter of said polynucleotide with a stronger promoter.

56. (New) The method of claim 36, wherein said plant is a monocotyledonous plant.

57. (New) The method of claim 36, wherein said plant is a dicotyledonous plant.

58. (New) The method of claim 36, wherein said increasing the expression is in a plant organ.

59. (New) The method of claim 36, wherein said plant organ is selected from the group consisting of leaves, the stem, and the roots.

60. (New) The method of claim 36, wherein said increasing the expression is in the whole plant.

61. (New) The method of claim 36, wherein said increasing the expression is in the seeds of said plant.

SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDMENT

Claims 1-35 and 37-42 have been canceled.

Claim 36 has been amended.

Claims 43-61 have been added.

The amendment of Claim 36 and new Claims 43-61 are supported by the originally filed claims and the specification at page 7, line 26 to page 12, line 20, as well as the Examples.

The specification has also been amended to remove hyperlinks and to correct typographical errors.

No new matter is believed to have been introduced by the present amendment.